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19 October 1951

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Office of Current Intelligence

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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DOS review(s) completed.

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## SUMMARY

[REDACTED]

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## NEAR EAST

[REDACTED]

25X1

3. Arab states not likely at present to accept membership in Middle East Command (page 4).
4. French favor strong stand in Near East (page 4).

25X1

[REDACTED]

6. Early Libyan independence seen as possible new grounds for criticizing West (page 5).

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[REDACTED]

- 2 -

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3. Arab states not likely at present to accept membership in Middle East Command:

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[REDACTED] The Saudi Arabian Minister in Baghdad believes that because of Egypt's refusal to join the Middle East Command no other Arab states will accept the plan. He told the US Ambassador in Baghdad

25X1

[REDACTED] it would be highly dangerous for any Arab leader to attempt to force his country into such an organization without prior general agreement.

The Iraqi Prime Minister, although showing interest in the Command proposal, expressed similar opinions to the US and British Ambassadors in Baghdad.

Comment: As Arab reactions continue to be reported, it is becoming clear that Arab participation in the Middle East Command cannot be anticipated while the Anglo-Egyptian dispute remains unresolved. British Foreign Office spokesmen also believe that the Iranians would refuse an associate membership in the Command were it offered them at the present time.

4. French favor strong stand in Near East:

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[REDACTED] France strongly supports the British stand in defense of the Suez Canal and favors continuance of efforts to establish the Middle East Command, regardless of the Egyptian rejection. A Foreign

Ministry spokesman states that his government is informing the British of this position in answer to Morrison's statement to the US and France that Britain is determined to remain in the Canal Zone. The French want to keep open the sea routes to Indochina, and they are anxious to check the Egyptians before French North Africa is affected.

Comment: French insistence on a unified Western policy in the Near East increases as the situation there becomes more threatening for all Western interests in the area. While the French are concerned over their investments in Iraq and the Suez Canal, their chief worry seems to be the implications for North Africa of an increasingly aggressive Arab nationalism.

- 4 -

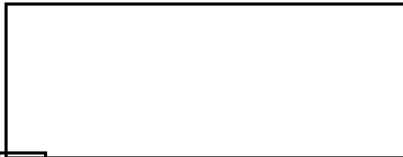
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6. Early Libyan independence seen as possible new grounds for criticizing West:

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The US Embassy in London considers that recent Near Eastern developments may make unwise the British proposal to grant independence to Libya prior to the next meeting of the UN General

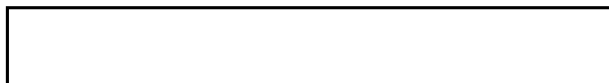
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Assembly. The Embassy thinks that the US, Great Britain and France may be placed in a difficult situation in the General Assembly if they are forced to explain the coincidence between early independence and the announcement of military negotiations with Libya.

The UN Commissioner for Libya is opposed to giving the Libyans independence by 1 November on the grounds that they are not ready to assume such responsibility.

- 5 -

25X1A



Comment: The General Assembly resolution on Libya states that independence is to be granted by 1 January 1952. Both France and Britain, administering powers, admit that the level of political development will cause difficulties whenever independence is granted. However, they have favored early independence in an effort to forestall an anticipated Egyptian campaign in the General Assembly to have the period of Libyan tutelage extended in the hope of being able to undermine Western influence.

The Libyans are pressing for independence, and the West is anxious to capitalize on their pro-Western disposition to secure military facilities. The current Egyptian attack against British treaty rights at Suez and the French position in Morocco will make Britain and France receptive to the suggested postponement of Libyan independence.

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